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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Letter dated 7 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, I have the honour to enclose herewith the message sent by Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the occupation of the Palestinian territory by Israel (see annex).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13 and 14, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations
Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement

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Annex to the letter dated 7 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Havana, 6 June 2007

Today, we are commemorating the fortieth anniversary of an illegal war of aggression and predation which, in open violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, Israel unleashed in 1967 against the Palestinian people and the neighbouring Arab peoples. Since then, it has maintained its control and occupation of the Arab territories, including an extensive portion of the Palestinian territory.

The Israeli illegal occupation, in violation of resolution 242 (1967) of the Security Council and other resolutions adopted by that body and by the General Assembly on the issue, has prevented the full exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to establish an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Throughout its 46 years, the Non-Aligned Movement has maintained a firm position of solidarity with the Palestinian people and its just cause, based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the rejection of the illegal occupation of the Arab territories by Israel and the condemnation of the massive, flagrant and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the occupying power.

At the XIV Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Havana in September 2006, the Heads of State or Government adopted an important special Declaration on Palestine, which looks at the serious situation persisting in the occupied territory of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and the effects of the protracted and ruthless military occupation of its land by Israel since 1967. While condemning the Israeli practices in the occupied territories, the Summit echoed the demand that the Palestinian people be allowed to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, to the return of refugees and to the establishment of a sovereign and independent State.

The Declaration adopted expressed the profound concern of the Movement for the tragic deterioration of the political, economic, social and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It also strongly condemned the ongoing slaughter of and injuries to Palestinian civilians through the excessive and inordinate use of force; selective attacks and extrajudicial executions, now on the rise and more flagrant; the ample destruction of properties, infrastructure and farmland; and the detention and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians.

It also reiterated the condemnation of Israel by the non-aligned countries because of the isolation of the Gaza Strip after implementation of its unilateral separation plans, as well as the construction of a wall by the occupying Power, disregarding the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004.

The Movement's statements during the Summit in Havana, as well as those made as a result of previous and subsequent events on the ground, retain their full validity in light of the current situation, in which there was even a threat by the occupying Power to assassinate the Prime Minister of Palestine.

Last 20 March, the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement issued a statement, circulated as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council under the symbol A/61/818-S/2007/161, in which it welcomed the creation of the Palestinian Government of national unity following the agreement reached in Mecca. It also noted that the creation of this new Government is a positive sign of the unity of the Palestinian people in these difficult times.

Despite the creation of a Government of national unity, the Palestinian people continue to endure the blocking of international assistance, which has gone on for over a year now. This state of affairs must cease, for it works against an eventual solution to the conflict through dialogue and negotiation — which the Israeli Government has refused to do on an ongoing basis.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that there is a real opportunity for the resumption of the peace process in the Middle East and the attainment of a peaceful settlement to the conflict to fully serve the legitimate interests and aspirations of the Palestinian people. We call upon the international community to fulfil its responsibility towards that end. We also urge the Government of Israel to accept the Arab Peace Initiative, reaffirmed at the nineteenth regular Arab Summit, held in Riyadh in March 2007, and we call for the resumption of the process of serious and direct negotiations on all fronts.

The Movement, while reiterating its full solidarity with the Palestinian people, will continue to contribute, to the extent of its ability, to the attainment of just, thorough and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the principle of territory for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map.

The non-aligned countries call upon the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility, enforce its own resolutions and take the necessary measures so that Israel respects international law and puts an end to the occupation and to its illegitimate and illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian territory.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Cuba's aspiration to contribute to the attainment of global, just and lasting peace for all nations in the Middle East, without any exclusion, so that it guarantees the Palestinian people its right to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in its independent State, based on the borders prior to 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the right of the Palestinian refugees to return home. In the pursuit of peace, the Arab peoples will always count on the full solidarity of the Cuban people.

(*Signed*) Felipe **Pérez Roque**